do not fear the big bad wolf

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do not fear the big bad wolf

by nbcravenstag

Summary

The Rougarou, or loup-garou, is a Cajun legend of a human who changes into a wolf at his/her own will.

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It should be impossible. It goes against everything that Hannibal has learned in his four decades on this planet, but…

“Will?”

The animal’s breath catches, and for a very long, very excruciating moment, the only sound is the wind whistling through the forest.

On the verge of desperation, Hannibal leans closer to the animal, and it remains frighteningly still. His heart is pounding and his blood is thrumming with powerful interest in this strange creature, burning him right up.

“Will?” He tries again, much clearer than the first time.

The wolf’s startling blue eyes flutter closed with a resigned sigh, and when he—because it certainly is a he—opens them again, Hannibal is met with a piercing stare that sends a shiver down his spine and liquid fire flowing through his body. He looks into the wolf and Will Graham stares back, and even though nothing about this makes sense, Hannibal Lecter is enthralled. He would never let this opportunity go to waste.

Notes

UPDATE 8/16: Buaregh, loves! So, After the amazing response on this fic, you may have noticed that this is, in fact, going to be a series now!! I have a second fic in the works, so I will be posting at some point, but thank you all for being so wonderful with your words. 🖤

Hello everyone! I was going to wait to post this but I just got so excited that I couldn't wait. Werewolves are my favorite cryptid. I love werewolf films, I love stories, all that shit. Will is from New Orleans, and since Louisiana has the Rougarou legends, I figured it would be a great idea. If this goes over well, I would be happy to continue this AU a bit more, but that it entirely up to you guys!

NOTE: I worked the legend to fit the narrative a bit, so the facts in here are not 100% correct, but if you want a fun time, look into the Rougarou, they're pretty cool!

I hope y'all enjoy!
Love,
Canary

See the end of the work for more notes

The air is frigid cold in Wolf Trap, although places without the hustle and bustle and warmth of the city often seem colder. Hannibal doesn't much enjoy the countryside; as it reminds him too much of Soviet flags and sleeping on cold, damp floors, but he understands why Will prefers it and takes care of his land. So, when Hannibal arrives on Will's property and sees the driveway filled in with snow, he frowns uneasily.

It's day three of no contact with Will Graham, and although Hannibal isn't prone to worry, he must admit that he is a little uneasy with the lack of responses. According to Jack Crawford, after their last case ended, Will had fallen ill and took time off, which Jack reluctantly granted. Of course, finding out that Will was under the weather yet again had been enough of an excuse for Hannibal to check up on him, which was met with no response. The moment the sun rose this morning and Hannibal checked his phone to see that no messages awaited him yet again, he simply hopped in his car and made the hour-long drive to Wolf Trap.

He gets out of his car and trudges casually through the snow up the porch. He rings the doorbell once and gets no response other than the barking dogs.

"Will?" He calls as he knocks noisily on the door. "Will, I just want to know if you are alright."

Yet again, no response.

Alarm bells start to ring around Hannibal's skull, and he quickly pulls his phone out of his pocket. He dials Will's number and holds it to his ear while he knocks again. When the phone starts ringing, he freezes in his tracks because on the other side of the door, in the silence of the woods, Hannibal can hear Will's phone vibrating on a hard surface until the call goes to voicemail again, and the buzzing stops.

That is all the invitation Hannibal needs now.

He procures the spare key Will had given him when he came to feed the dogs from his coat pocket and slides it into the lock, giving the handle a twist.

The little farmhouse looks just as it usually does; warm, rustic, with fishing equipment and pieces of motors scattered around the place with casual disarray. Will's pack approaches him the moment he steps through the door, which is also nothing new, so he takes the time to pet each of their fuzzy heads. "I apologize that I was unable to bring you snacks this time." He tells them seriously. "Where is Will?"

As Hannibal looks around the room, he feels the uneasiness settle within his bones because the issue is so glaring and unsettling.

Will is not here.

His phone is left on the nightstand next to a mostly empty glass of water. The bed is turned down and messy as if it had been slept in; but upon further inspection, they are stone cold and the scent of them is stale. No one has slept in this bed for at least thirty-six hours.

There is, however, a scent that Hannibal does not recognize that lingers in the air. It smells of spider lilies, dirt, and blood, and as he walks further into the space, Hannibal realizes that the scent is coming from the field to the back of the property, just outside. There is an open window facing the same direction, and anticipation sends sparks down Hannibal's spine. He takes a blade from the table where Will's tools are and approaches the window ever so slowly.

It takes Hannibal seconds to spot it.

A large wolfdog with deep brown fur is sprawled out in the snow several yards from the window. The snow behind it is disturbed and stained with scarlet while the snow in front of it is pure white and blanketed, meaning the beast had dragged itself here, only to collapse meer feet from Will's house and Hannibal's pulse quickens. The first tendrils of dread have started to pull at his thoughts, the idea that something horrific must have happened to Will.

He needs more information.

Cautiously, he makes his way out of the back door and approaches the wolf. It is breathing in short, shallow pants complete with the occasional whimper, and for once, Hannibal is unsure of what he should do.

However, the animal decides for him, because it suddenly takes a deep inhale, its eyes shoot open and they lock on Hannibal's form.

He freezes in his footsteps, remaining as still as he possibly can while mentally calculating how many steps it would take to sprint to the window and dive in before the wolf can charge.

He can see the wolf's eyes now. They are cloudy and a bit unfocussed, most likely from blood loss and being half buried in the snow, but Hannibal finds himself instantly captivated in the endless blue of its irises and the… *awareness* he can see deep within them. The animal makes no move to attack, or maybe is in too much pain to do so, but something relaxes in Hannibal's belly, and he takes another step forward.

The wolf flinches—actually *flinches*— but does not growl or coil. In fact, all it really does is keep its eyes—such *beautiful* blue eyes—on Hannibal and let out a whine.

It must be one of Will's pack. Hannibal concludes. The animal is docile and seemingly domesticated, or just very smart. It is not fearful of people despite its obvious injuries, which means the beast may not be a danger after all. It is simply just… large.

"I am not going to hurt you." He tells the wolf in the same voice he used for patients in the ER.

The wolf huffs tiredly and its eyes flutter closed for a brief second.

"I would like to help. Will you allow me to help you?"

He feels a bit ridiculous talking to a dog, but he hopes that the soothing tone in his voice will be enough to placate it while he inspects its injuries. He still must find Will, but Will Graham

is very protective over his pack, and he would certainly want to know his (very large) dog isn't frozen or bleeding to death. He can also smell traces of Will clinging to the animal's fur which is fresher than anything else in the area, so Will and this animal interacted recently.

There is the startling second possibility that this animal itself is responsible for Will's disappearance, but Hannibal tries to push those thoughts away. It seems unlikely given the wolf's behavior towards him, but the animal appears intelligent enough to be dangerous.

The wolf whines, which brings Hannibal forward. He closes the distance between them carefully, just in case the animal decides to attack him after all, but to his relief, the animal does no such thing. It lies there watching him with blurry eyes, even when he crouches down in the snow beside it. Hannibal looks into its eyes and finds them so achingly familiar. They are not just blue, he notes, they are that specific blue-green that Will Graham shares, the color that sends a shiver up Hannibal's spine every time he is permitted to see them.

Fascinating.

And again, much like Will Graham himself does, the wolf breaks eye contact very soon after making it and chooses to stare off into the distance instead.

The feeling of intrigue is becoming stronger and stronger by the moment, bordering on *obsessive* as Bedelia would say. But Hannibal has stumbled upon this creature that shares Will's eyes where Will himself is not present, and at the moment, nothing else in the world seems more important than unveiling the mystery behind this.

Hannibal forces himself to look away from the wolf's face and examines the body instead. There are several lacerations on the animal's torso; not deep to a life-threatening degree, but certainly large, indicative of another animal's claws. A coyote or worse, a bear, perhaps? He places his hands on the animal's body near the blood-matted fur but quickly removes them when the wolf shudders under his touch.

Its eyes dart back to Hannibal's again, and for a moment, Hannibal sees Will Graham's face in his mind; torment and irritation hiding the deep sense of longing for connection and kindness, and he although every instinct is telling him to get away, Hannibal cannot move. This animal is… like nothing he's ever seen before.

The pit forming in his stomach is unfamiliar and perhaps the most unnerving point in this entire ordeal, but Hannibal cannot deny that he is *worried.* Will's absence in the home is becoming intolerable the longer Hannibal remains here, and he is becoming fearful that something is very, *very* wrong indeed.

The animal whines like it's been struck, breaking Hannibal from his thoughts. It's staring at him hazily, but there's a certain desperation in its eyes, in the way it seems to be pleading with him for help…

The way Will Graham often looks at him.

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He offers Will a smile. “You certainly neglected to mention this in your sessions.” He teases.

The wolf actually *glares* at him, and it tramples every last shred of doubt that Hannibal has. Only one person in the world looks at him like that.

Setting aside his joy for now, Hannibal places his hand on Will’s torso, narrowly missing the wound there. “We must get you inside. Are you able to stand? I will help to steady you.”

Will lets out a huff, then very slowly twists his wolf body so that he can lift himself up out of the snow. Hannibal gets to his feet and helps Will to stand on his own four legs, momentarily dazzled by the overwhelming size of the creature. In a human form, Will has never been a large man; strength coming from the wirey muscle he’s accumulated after years on the docks and FBI training, but in this form, Will is much larger and much more powerful. Larger than a regular wolf or a hound for certain, and much heavier, if the massive weight leaning into Hannibal’s thighs is anything to go by.

Still, he helps Will slowly cross the yard and through the side door where the warmth of the farmhouse is a much-appreciated comfort. Even Will who is covered in thick chestnut-colored fur seems to be grateful.

The rest of the pack runs to greet him with whimpers and excited yips, and Hannibal realizes that the dogs are very aware of what their pack leader is, which intrigues Hannibal to no end. Will wordlessly gets them all to part like the Red Sea for him, and he carefully limps over towards the large human bed in the corner.

“Do you allow animals on the furniture?” Hannibal jests when Will crawls up onto the mattress. The glare he gets in return put a smile on his face. “I shall retrieve my medical bag from my car.”

Will huffs in response and collapses down onto the bed, clearly exhausted from his trip inside.

Hannibal watches him for a moment longer before turning away.

"I suppose we should set up a line of communication, as you are unable to speak verbally at his given time." Hannibal says as he sets up his equipment. Unfortunately, he does not have a lot of supplies, at least, he does not believe he has the necessary supplies to treat a werewolf (and *God,* what a realization that is).

Will eyes him sleepily.

"I will stick to yes or no questions only. Blink once for yes, and twice for no. Does that sound simple enough?"

The wolf blinks once, and Hannibal smiles.

He takes a flashlight and shines it around the large wounds on Will's torso, cataloging each large puncture mark and gash. The wounds seem to have healed over incredibly fast, though some of the deeper ones are still bleeding. "Do you have an accelerated healing factor?" He asks.

Will blinks in affirmation.

"You really are quite remarkable, Will." He says as he takes disinfectant and a rag. "I apologize, but this will most likely hurt. I would appreciate it if you didn't bite me." This time, the wolf gives him an almost challenging look that is playful underneath the threat, and Hannibal chuckles.

One by one, Hannibal disinfects the wounds and sutures what he believes requires it. Will stays mostly still, only signaling his discomfort with quiet whines, a twitch of his large tail, or a silent snarl on his lips. Hannibal finds that the process takes a bit longer than it should, partially because he was a physician, sure, but he has no experience treating large animals, let alone an impossible thing like Will Graham's werewolf. (Is that even the correct term? He'll have to ask at some point.)

That, however, leads to yet another realization; *can* Will change back? Will he?

"Will?"

The wolf huffs and raises his large head to stare blearily at Hannibal. He looks exhausted, having used a lot of his energy coming inside and then having to be patched up, but Hannibal can see that he's paying attention.

"Is this the first time you have transformed?" He asks. He has so many questions, but he has to prioritize them.

Will does nothing for a moment; only lies there and stares with an apprehensive expression. Then, he blinks once, then twice, and Hannibal feels himself smile.

"Then, I take it, you will be returning to human form at some point?"

Another single blink.

“Does anyone else know?”

Almost instantly, Will makes a sound that could be a scoff, then blinks twice to indicate a *no.*

Hannibal nods and reaches up to undo the tie around his neck. “Well then, as a doctor, and as your friend, I cannot simply leave you in a vulnerable state, so if you are amenable, I would like to stay here until you have… transformed. Would that be alright?” He knows that even if Will says no, Hannibal wouldn’t leave.

Surprisingly, Will agrees, and then closes his eyes, dropping his head onto the blanket and taking a deep, tired breath.

“I am also going to contact Jack Crawford and let him know that you are still quite ill and that I will be here taking care of you so that he has no reason to make a house call.”

The wolf simply huffs, and Hannibal takes out his phone to send a quick text to Jack, who instantly responds with a thank you and request to be updated. Hannibal pockets his phone, then turns his attention back to the werewolf on the bed.

How the day could have ended up like this, Hannibal will never know. All of his life, he has believed that monsters are made of men, influenced by human behavior and emotion, or the lack-there-of, depending on the psychopath. Now he has learned that monsters come in several forms, including animal ones, and it has thrown off his perception to an insane degree.

Though, he cannot find it within himself to be fearful. This prodigious creature is clearly more powerful than Hannibal thought possible, larger than any predator in the woods, driven by humanity and reason and the tormented, impossible mind of Will Graham. Even in this form where his speech is restricted, Will’s mind is still there. The rapid pounding of Hannibal’s heart is unfamiliar but welcome. This boy will never cease to amaze him.

Without thinking much about it, Hannibal reaches out and runs his fingers through the soft fur on Will’s side. It’s thick, coarse, and permeates the air with the sweetness of lilies and blood, but even more so, it is *soft.* Plush and soft, the perfect fur coat.

Under his hands, Will snuffles sleepily into the bedsheets, and Hannibal grins, abandoning caution and dedicating his attention to Will’s beautiful fur. A soft thumping sound breaks his focus, and he looks down to see Will’s tail thumping against the bed contently, and something inside Hannibal’s heart melts. It’s impossible to see; he’s never been a dog person at all, but he certainly is a Will Graham person, and if this large wolf is a part of Will, then Hannibal can certainly learn to adore the wolf too. Plus, the feeling of pride from being someone that Will trusts enough to allow him to see this form is staggering, and now he’s wagging his tail like the rest of his pack. Beautifully ferocious, yet a slave to basic human decency and kind touch, even as a werewolf. *Beautiful, astounding boy.*

He could get up, he knows. He could leave Will to sleep and sit nearby until this wears off, but he knows as he is thinking this that he won’t. Will has allowed him to touch, and

Hannibal is nothing if not a seeker of opportunity.

So, he adjusts himself on the bed beside the large wolf, keeping one hand in Will's fur. His hand is tingling with excitement, but Will's tail is still thumping against the bed as Hannibal moves closer. They stay like that, wolf and man, Will and Hannibal, and eventually, Hannibal finds his eyelids drifting closed.

When Hannibal wakes up sometime later, he becomes aware of two things: One is that the house is darker than it was before, meaning that he has been asleep for at least a few hours. Two, he has a distinctly human shape pressed against his side, and his own arm is draped around a torso and touching flesh instead of fur.

He opens his eyes and finds himself looking into Will Graham's sleeping (human) face, lips slightly parted, his cheeks flushed and skin pleasantly warm. Hannibal breathes in deep, taking in the familiar scent of Will, mixed with the now lingering scent of the wolf that he was. Now that he is lying so close, he can see how peaceful Will looks for the first time that Hannibal has ever seen. He is serene.

Will is covered in the sheet from the bed, only from the waist down, and Hannibal takes a few selfish moments to memorize every inch of exposed skin. The wounds inflicted by whatever woodland predator Will encountered as a wolf are still visible, though most have closed up and skinned over to have an angry pink hue around them. Hannibal can see the stab wound that Will had suffered as a police officer, one he has envisioned but never saw in person. Hannibal is definitely aware of how beautiful Will is, and having him so close is testing his self-control.

As if hearing his thoughts, Will's eyes open and his breath catches when he sees how close Hannibal is.

"It appears," Hannibal says, his voice rough with sleep. "That we have slept the day away."

Will sighs and closes his eyes again. "I figured I would." He replies in his own gravelly voice. "I didn't expect you to stay in bed with me."

Hannibal chuckles. "It was not my intention. I apologize for invading your space."

"Don't you always?" The tone is light and playful, and immediately, Will's face pales and he sits upright so quickly that Hannibal has to move away to avoid getting clocked by his elbow.

"Will? What is it?" Hannibal tries, slightly alarmed by the sudden panic.

Will ignores him, but huffs out a breath and falls back down onto the bed. "Thank fuck, I have a sheet." He whispers, seemingly to himself. "Did you tuck me in?"

"If I did, it was not consciously." Hannibal admits, vaguely remembering becoming conscious at one point and pulling the sheet over the large wolf beside him.

Will groans and passes his hands over his face. “I don’t… I uh… I am *very* naked. And you’re in my bed.”

“I will go to the kitchen and prepare us each a cup of coffee if you would like to get dressed.” Hannibal suggests.

“Fine.”

Satisfied, Hannibal turns and throws his legs over the side of the bed. As he retreats into the kitchen, he hears the shuffling of the bedsprings and smiles to himself in excitement. Now, he’ll be able to ask his questions.

Will’s coffee maker is ancient and makes a horrible sound while it brews, and Hannibal grabs two identical mugs from the cupboard while he waits.

Just as he’s pouring their drinks, Will stumbles into the kitchen, now wearing jeans and a flannel and looking much more like himself. He’s emanating anxiousness and apprehension, and he eyes Hannibal carefully as he takes his seat at the kitchen table.

For several moments, neither of them says anything. Hannibal watches Will, and Will stares down into his steaming coffee mug. Then, after a small eternity in silence, Will sighs dramatically and rubs his face again. “I feel like I should be doing the walk of shame.” He notes.

Hannibal cocks his head. “What do you have to be shameful about?”

“Oh, lots of things. Mostly waking up naked in bed with my therapist who now knows the worst about me.” Will replies.

He considers this. “I am not your therapist.” He settles on.

Will laughs quietly, tension falling from his shoulders. “Yeah, that’s what we should focus on here.” He takes a deep breath, takes a sip of his coffee, and stares somewhere over Hannibal’s shoulder. “I’m not a werewolf. Not exactly.”

Hannibal is admittedly a little shocked, but he doesn’t let it show. Instead, he leans forward a bit more. “What are you?”

Will’s eyes flash to his, and his heart stutters. “I’m a Rougarou.”

The confusion must show on his face because Will smirks, then he hides it in his coffee mug, dragging out the moment.

“Rougarou, or Loup-garou, depending on where you are in Louisiana, is a Creole legend. Translated, it basically means a man who… who can become a wolf. Or a wolf-like creature.” Will sighs, runs a hand over his face and adjusts in his seat. “The Louisiana werewolf. There are legends that go back over a hundred years, and every culture has its own version. Some use the legend as a way to scare children. The Catholics believe that we hunt down the ones who do not obey the rules of Lent.” He scoffs. “As if we’d really care about that.”

Hannibal digests this, his mind reeling a bit. “Is it in your bloodline?”

Will laughs, and it’s full of resentment. “No, thank god. It can be hereditary though if one or two Rougarou decide to mate. If you aren’t born with the gene, there are only two ways to become a Rougarou; a bite or a scratch. And they do different things. When a Rougarou scratches you, the curse is only temporary. A hundred-and-one days, and it’s gone like a bad case of Epstein Barr. If you’re scratched, you’re generally bi-pedal and resemble the more *traditional werewolf* form. If you’re bitten though…” A haunted look flashes in his eyes, and his voice lowers to a whisper. “You’ve got the wolf in you for life.”

“I take it, then, that you were the victim of a bite?”

Will nods. “I was twenty-three. All I wanted was a relaxing vacation, so I decided to go camping. I was alone, and…” He swallows hard, and Hannibal feels the urge to reach out and comfort him. “I knew I was being followed, but, I didn’t know what it was. I heard the growls, and I just started running. It was the middle of the night, I couldn’t see anything, I just wanted to get away, so I ran. It was stupid. Rougarou love the chase.

“It got me down by the swamp. It tackled me to the ground and I had to fight it off, but it bit me somewhere along the way. I didn’t even feel it at first; I was so hopped up on adrenaline. Looking back, it probably wanted to kill me, but I fought it off, so I got landed with the bite as a reward.” The last words come out in a sneer, laced with venom and hatred.

“Did you know right away that you had been infected?”

“No. It took about another few weeks before I… Before I *changed* for the first time.”

Something else clicks in Hannibal’s mind then, another correlation that seems ridiculous, but may be possible, given that anything could be at this point. “Last night was a full moon. Is that what—”

“I can change whenever I want.” Will explains. “I just… don’t have a choice when the moon is full.” He absent-mindedly runs his hand over a visible scratch mark on his arm, one from the night before.

Hannibal watches him carefully, curiosity burning on his tongue. “Do you often come back to yourself wounded?” The transformation back to human had happened while they were just sleeping, but that doesn’t mean that it isn’t painful. That thought is definitely not a pleasant one, and he’s blindsided by the concern that he feels towards Will at this moment.

However, Will laughs, genuinely laughs, with his head thrown back. “Uh, no. Not usually.” He says, snickering into his coffee.

The laughter is infectious, and Hannibal finds himself smiling too.

“I uh… I was fighting off a black bear.” Will explains, his cheeks going a little red. “I don’t like to hurt the wildlife, but he hit me first.” He shrugs it off, seemingly embarrassed for some reason that Hannibal doesn’t quite understand. “He got a few good hits in before I took him down. I was able to get home, but I was exhausted, which is why you found me where

you did." He smiles up at Hannibal, and the sight goes straight to Hannibal's heart. "I'm actually glad you found me. I would have woken up naked in the snow and you can imagine how well that would have gone for me."

"Thankfully, I was here." Hannibal agrees, his stomach twisting at the idea of Will being left in the snow. He chooses not to dwell on his for the sake of his own sanity, but also because it is irrelevant now; he was here, Will is safe. Instead, he says: "When you are in your wolf form, what do you do?"

Will visibly freezes in his seat, piquing Hannibal's curiosity even more. Their eyes lock briefly once again, and Will bites at his lip. "I run." He breathes. "I'm much faster as a wolf because we have enhanced speed, so sometimes I just… go."

"Where do you go?"

"Anywhere I want. No border patrol can stop me, and I'm faster than any car. I can tackle any terrain. I can go *anywhere."* The words come out slow and wistful, filled with longing.

Hannibal imagines Will Graham in his Rougarou form running freely through the thick underbrush of the Virginia forests, nothing more than a large blur to the other wildlife he passes, but built with all of the power of a wolf. *Magnificent. "These moments of escape are not to be despised. They come too seldom."*

The corner of Will's mouth curls into a smile, but it's too strained to come off as pleased. "What makes you think I'm escaping?"

"Are you not?" Hannibal challenges. "You use your animal form to run away from the darkness and horrors that you face as a human being. Running away is not a freedom that you currently have. It is your way out of dark places."

The glare that Will gives him would make anyone else tremble in fear, but it leaves Hannibal feeling exhilarated. Will Graham's anger is simply too lovely. "You don't think turning into a literal monster is a *dark place* in of itself, Dr. Lecter?" He all but snarls, and Hannibal's pulse quickens when he sees the flash of the wolf in Will's eyes. "Have you actually read monster legends? Ever seen a monster movie? Being a Rougarou isn't freeing, it isn't glorious; it's damning. Especially for… *them."* The last word comes out with an actual growl, an echo of the monster inside of Will.

Hannibal says nothing but cocks his head to the side.

Will is staring at him with a fire burning behind his eyes. His hands are still shaking, but besides that, he is utterly still. The air between them is thick with tension.

"Wolves are hunters, Doctor." Will deadpans. "So are Rougarou. But we don't hunt deer, or elk, or rabbits."

The implication is so glaring, and Hannibal had suspected that this was the case, but *hearing* it? Hearing Will confess to the darkness he carries so strenuously? It is *everything.* "And what do you do with the people that you hunt, Will?" He asks, making Will flinch.

There is another prolonged pause, only this time the room becomes sour with the scent of fear. On the table, both of his hands are clenched around the coffee mug so tightly that his knuckles are ghostly white, and his eyes are glued to the tabletop. Even his breathing has stopped.

Hannibal's heartbeat quickens. He feels he knows the answer already, but *God,* does he want to hear Will say it.

Finally, after a short eternity has passed, Will looks him in the eye and Hannibal envisions the icy stare of the predator that lies within his blood, heathenish and dazzling all at once. He opens his mouth once, then closes it again, and it takes incredible self-control for Hannibal to stay very still when he tries a second time.

"The same thing you do, Dr. Lecter." Will murmurs.

It is Hannibal's turn to be silent now.

He remains as still and predatory as a serpent, unblinking, challenging, keeping Will's gaze locked with his. Many thoughts run through his mind, so many things he wants to do, so many possibilities. Will seems to be memorizing every slope and angle of his face while the silence between them becomes oppressive.

One very large part of Hannibal is very curious about what it would take to kill Will Graham. He does not possess silver bullets at this current time, not even in all of his vast collections across several countries. Would any object made of silver do? Or is silver just another myth?

But does he *want* to kill him? Will has seen him, or at least, seen him partially, not to mention that they both share the same taste in cuisine. Will Graham has become more than simply just a fascination. His mind is nothing like Hannibal has ever encountered before, and although it may have started out as a remedy for boredom and the opportunity for companionship before the inevitable happened and Will took the fall for Hannibal's crimes, their… *relationship* has grown into something much more, and Hannibal finds that he is happy to reconsider his plans.

And now Will Graham has proven himself entirely unpredictable once again, much more fascinating than anything else in the world, one who appreciates Hannibal's own monstrous tendencies and indulges in his own. This impossible man, who is not really a man at all, is made of blood, bone, and magic, and Hannibal is the only one to know it.

Will breaks the silence first, his face softening to something close to sheepishness once again. "My body can tell the difference between meat that came from an animal and meat that did not." He explains quietly. "Rougarou, um… We have to consume humans. As a human, I can eat anything, but going without a hunt for so long is… painful."

"The hunger?" Hannibal guesses, leaning forward.

Will nods. "It's… it's an ache in my teeth. " He swipes his tongue over his teeth instinctively, as if he could feel the ache just from speaking of it. "I used to try to hold back, but the more you resist, the worse it gets. The ache spreads into your throat, into your stomach, you feel

like you're being ripped inside out. And sometimes…" He pauses and swallows hard. "Eventually it becomes too much and the Rougarou decides for you. You have no choice." He lets out a soft laugh and runs a hand over his tired face. "I knew what you were the first time you brought me breakfast."

"You referred to the meal as 'delicious' if I recall." Hannibal notes.

"Because it was." Will replies simply. "It always is." He licks at his teeth again, and Hannibal wonders if the ache is not just a memory anymore. "Eating with you… it's surreal. Because it's the only time it doesn't hurt."

When their eyes lock this time, Will's are bright and frightened, but vulnerable, grateful, and so impossibly full of devotion. The sight of it cracks the barriers around Hannibal's heart, filling it with pride and making his blood sing, but alternatively, hurt and anger are rolling over the words, the monster within him growling at the implication. "You had the opportunity to take me down, but yet you did not because I was useful to you. How very convenient." He replies icily.

Will's eyes get wide. "That's not what I meant."

"Would you care to elaborate then?"

"I didn't turn you in, Dr. Lecter, because I don't want you to go to prison." He snaps back. "I know why you kill, you know that I do. Being what I am, it was easier to see you. You stand in front of these pests that you've captured and you rip into them while they're still breathing because they are *nothing.* The only difference between us there is when I kill some back alley rapist, I don't turn him into a gory *La Madonnina* for Jack to find . "

It's horrifically rude, but that intoxicating amusement simply doesn't allow Hannibal to be upset over the remark. Will is delightfully irascible. "I suppose you leave no evidence behind?"

Will sighs and it sounds like the irritable huff from the wolf. "Sometimes. Other times I rip them apart."

"And how does it feel to rip them apart?"

"It makes me feel alive." Will's sudden smile is soft, and when he looks up at Hannibal, he certainly looks more alive than Hannibal has ever seen him, and it makes his heart stutter. "At least, it does now. I have you to thank for that."

Hannibal's breath catches.

Will reaches across the table ever so slowly and places his hand on Hannibal's arm, sending sparks throughout his whole body. "Don't you get it? You made me see the beauty in what I could do. I couldn't tell you before because I figured if I told you I was a Southern cryptid that ate people, you'd have me committed on the spot." He pauses, narrowing his eyes thoughtfully. "Or you would have killed me. Either way, I lose."

The fingers tighten on his arm, and Hannibal suddenly can't handle not touching Will back. He twists his arm and boldly takes Will's hand, savoring the way Will shivers under his touch. He smiles knowingly. "You responded similarly this morning."

Will's cheeks turn pink and he tries to glare, but it comes off more like a grimace. "I can't help it. It feels… good."

"I do not mind. I actually was quite flattered." Hannibal smiles at him, and some of the mortification falls away from Will's face. "You do not receive touch often as a man out of choice. Is it less unappealing as a wolf?" He asks.

"Uh… no, not really." The blush burns even brighter, feeding the obsession within Hannibal. "I just… I like it when you touch me. I'm surprised that you didn't figure that out sooner."

And Heaven help him, Hannibal laughs, hearty and genuine, feeling the love he has for this man filling his lungs and embedding himself in every single atom. He lifts the hand to his lips and presses a kiss to the skin, not taking his eyes off of Will for even a second. Desire clouds brilliant blue eyes, and the monster inside of him purrs. "I did not want to push my affections on you if they were unwanted." He says, though in the back of his mind, he knows that he would have found it unacceptable.

Will scoffs at him. "Hannibal, I don't think there is a universe where I would be able to resist you."

Before he can say anything or form a coherent thought, Will leans across the table and presses his lips to Hannibal's. It isn't hurried, rushed, or frantic, but Hannibal responds hungrily all the same, growling into Will's mouth, bringing a hand up to cradle the back of his neck as he swipes his tongue over Will's pointed teeth. It earns him a needy whimper, which he swallows greedily.

When they break apart, their lips are red and swollen from the force, and they're both gasping and panting into each other's mouths. Hannibal rests his forehead against Will's and runs his fingers soothingly through the curls at the base of his neck.

"You're really okay with this?" Will rasps, his voice painfully raw. "You still want me even though I… despite what I am?"

Hannibal hums affectionately and kisses him again, just a peck, but he pours all of his love into it. "I want you because of who you are, Will."

Will sighs happily and sags a bit in Hannibal's arms. "I'm not good with words like you, but… the feeling is very, *very* mutual." Then as an afterthought, he adds: "You should be careful though."

"Why is that, beloved?" Hannibal murmurs as he tucks a curl behind Will's ear.

Will smiles, then pulls him back in for another passionate kiss before uttering so low it comes out like a growl: "Because Rougarou mate for life. Once you're mine, you're *mine."*

The challenge is wicked, exquisite, breathtaking, and everything that he wants. It floods Hannibal's body with madness, and lust, and adoration for this impossible creature in his arms. He tightens his arms around Will, curls one hand into his hair and yanks his boy's head back to reveal his throat. Will's surprised little gasp is stolen as Hannibal claims his mouth once again with so much power and possessiveness that he can taste blood where his teeth nicked Will's lip. He feels love deep into his bones, curling around his insides like vines, and he envisions them blooming with spider lilies stained with blood.

"As if I would not slaughter anyone who thought to take you from me." Hannibal growls against Will's lips.

A full body shudder sends Will sagging forward against his chest and Hannibal holds him close. "Stay with me tonight?" Will whispers into his collarbone. "I want to show you what I look like in the moonlight."

Hannibal's already racing pulse seems to skyrocket. A chance to see his boy embrace himself and surrender to instinct is the most precious gift that Will could give him. He only wishes the night would come sooner.

"How could I refuse?"

End Notes

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